**RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS**

**by Simon Moss**

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| **Introduction** |

After completing a PhD—or perhaps a Masters by Research—many candidates would like to secure a research fellowship or postdoctoral scholarship. A research fellowship is a research position, often located at a university or research institution, that typically lasts between one and five years. Sometimes, the university or institution will pay the salaries. On other occasions, some funding body, such as the NHMRC or ARC, will pay the salaries. This document outlines some information that could help you secure one of these fellowships.

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| **Research professional** |

Perhaps the most comprehensive database of research fellowships can be extracted from <https://www.researchprofessional.com/>. The following table offers some insights on how you can utilize this site.

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| Activity | Details |
| Log in | * You should be able to use your staff account to log in; * If not, seek support from the CDU library |
| Press “Advanced search” | * This option appears towards the top |
| Confine your search to early-career fellowships | * In particular, click “award type” * Next, choose “Early-Career fellowships”, and then “update” |
| Consider other limitations to your search as well | * For example, you can confine your search to a specific discipline, such as “Social Sciences” |
| Press Search to uncover a list of opportunities |  |
| Locate opportunities in Australia or wherever you would like to live | * To achieve this goal, sort the results by “funder country” |

Alternatively, you could utilize the existing databases of jobs. For example

* Google “unijobs”, “jora Australia”, or “Seek”
* Enter “research fellow”, “research fellowships”, or “postdoctoral” in the Search box
* This procedure could uncover fellowships that are funded by universities or corporations, such as Westpac or the Myer Foundation.

You should perhaps seek these opportunities several months before you plan to submit your thesis, if not earlier. You will thus learn more about the range of opportunities that are available as well as the key selection criteria.

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| **Discovery Early Career Researcher Award or DECRA** |

The DECRA, a fellowship that is supported by the Australian Research Council, is designed to support researchers who completed their PhD within the last five years. This attractive fellowship lasts three years. The Australian Research Council offers up to 200 of these awards every year. Nevertheless, these fellowships are competitive: only about 15% or so of applicants are successful. The following table outlines some key details

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| Question | Details |
| What is the level of funding I would receive if successful | * In 2019, DECRA research fellows earned about $95 000 a year in salary—for three years * They could also receive up to $40 000 a year to support project costs * Project costs can include equipment, technical support, travel, accommodation, and stipends for a PhD candidate |
| Who is eligible to apply | * In general, applicants must have completed their PhD within 5 years—unless they experienced significant disruptions * Applicants must be permanent residents or citizens of Australia * The applicant cannot apply more than twice in their life * The applicant must be employed at an Australian university or a partner research institute * Usually, the applicant must work on the project full-time, although exceptions may be permitted * The applicant must live in Australia during at least two thirds of this project |
| How does the council decide who can receive a DECRA? | The council utilises four criteria to evaluate the applications   * Project quality and innovation [40%]—the extent to which the research addresses a significant problem, applies an innovative approach, and advances knowledge * Record of the candidate [35%]—the quality and quantity of the publications and grants of the candidate and their capacity to conduct the research. Ideally, candidates would have published more than 10 papers. * Research environment [15%]—the extent to which the research environment is collaborative provides the necessary facilities, and encourages the candidate to disseminate, promote, and commercialize the research * Feasibility and benefit [10%]—the degree to which the research is feasible within the budget and timeline as well as beneficial economically, socially, culturally, or environmentally. |
| How can I fulfil these criteria? | To increase your capacity to fulfil these criteria, you should   * demonstrate how your research is related to the strategic priorities of the Australian Research Council. Visit [www.arc.gov.au](http://www.arc.gov.au) and then search “Science and Research Priorities”. For example, in 2019, the priorities revolved around food, soil, water, transport, cybersecurity, energy, resources, advanced manufacturing, environmental change, and health * demonstrate how the priorities of your university align to your research |

For further information, visit tinyurl.com/y4oj28ss

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| **National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Early Career Fellowships** |

The NHMRC Early Career Fellowships support researchers in health and medicine for four years. The fellowships are attractive but competitive. Typically, the NHMRC receive almost 500 applicants a year; about 25% of these applications receive funding. The following table outlines some key details

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| Question | Details |
| What topics does this fellowship include? | * Applicants need to be conducting research in health and medicine, including bioinformatics and biostatistics |
| What is the level of funding I would receive if successful? | * In 2019, applicants received about $76 500. * In many instances, the university would then offer additional money to support the living expenses and research costs |
| Who is eligible to apply | * In general, applicants must have completed their PhD within 2 years—unless they experienced significant disruptions—typically in a field related to health * Applicants must be permanent residents or citizens of Australia * Applicants must not have received this fellowship before * The applicant must be employed at an Australian university or partner research institutes * Usually, the applicant must work on the project full-time, although exceptions may be permitted   Actually, this fellowship comprises 10 or so distinct categories. The precise eligibility criteria varies slightly across the categories. For example   * For some categories, but not all categories, the research must be undertaken in Australia. |
| How does the NHMRC decide who can receive a fellowship? | The council utilises three criteria to evaluate the applications   * Research output, such as number or quality of papers, conferences, and grants * Research proposal and environment, such as vital objectives, a flawless design, a feasible project, a supportive environment—with sufficient mentoring and resources * Professional contribution to health and medicine—including supervision, awards, community engagement, and peer review |

For more information, visit <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/find-funding/early-career-fellowships>

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| **Other sources of funding** |

To uncover sources of funding outside Australia, visit <https://asntech.github.io/postdoc-funding-schemes/>. Specifically

* this website lists a series of other research fellowships around the world
* for many of these fellowships, applicants can be residents of any nation

To illustrate,

* if you are willing to live in the US for 3 to 10 months, you might want to consider Australian Fulbright Postdoctoral Opportunities. See <https://www.fulbright.org.au/scholarships/fulbright-postdoctoral-opportunities/>

If you are willing to live in Western Australia, you might also want to consider the Forrest Research Fellowship. See [www.forrestresearch.org.au/prospectfellowships](http://www.forrestresearch.org.au/prospectfellowships), specializing in environment, food, wellbeing, frontier technologies, arts, and culture.